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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 004779

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STATE FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A, S/CRS, SA/PB, S/CT,
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: TRIBAL AFFAIRS MINISTER ON SECURITY AND BORDER
JIRGAS

REF: KABUL 4772

Classified By: CDA Richard B. Norland for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) During an October 1 courtesy call, Minister of Frontier and Tribal Affairs Abdul Karim Brahowie blamed Pakistan for Afghanistan's security woes. While no concrete results have been seen from the North Waziristan agreement, the Minister sees a role for tribal leaders in reducing border tensions provided that the GOA places trust and confidence in them. The Ministry is prepared to convene a cross-border jirga between Presidents Karzai and Musharraf as soon as it receives an order from President Karzai. END
SUMMARY

¶2. (SBU) During an October 1 courtesy call on Minister of Frontier and Tribal Affairs Abdul Karim Brahowie by A/DCM, Political Counselor, and Public Affairs Counselor, the Minister shared his views on tribal relations and security, the North Waziristan agreement, and joint jirgas between Presidents Karzai and Musharraf and tribal leaders on both sides of the border.

Tribal Relations and Security

¶3. (C) In response to a question from A/DCM about the role of the tribes in establishing and maintaining security, Minister Brahowie responded by blaming Pakistan, saying "I can tell you about security in one sentence -- it's related to the policies of neighboring countries". He said that if Afghanistan's neighbors wanted peace, we would have it. If not, tensions would continue regardless of all the talks.

Commenting on the North Waziristan agreement, he observed that it was strange that a national leader of a country had to sign an agreement with his own people. The Minister thought this was strange and showed the GOP's "weakness". Brahowie described Musharraf's performance in Washington as aggressive toward the U.S, UK, and President Karzai, in contrast to President Karzai who was "calm". While recognizing that Musharraf was in a "hard position", the Minister said it was difficult to defend his policies. He contrasted Pakistan with Iran "which didn't blame others for its cross-border problems". The Minister called on the GOP to demonstrate that it was not beholden to the ISI and to prove this was not the case. The GOP had a responsibility to do this, he asserted. In short, if Pakistan wanted peace and security, it was easy to accomplish. We don't need all these agreements, he said dismissively.

North Waziristan Agreement

14. (C) Asked by A/DCM about the quality of elders in the North Waziristan region that would participate in the proposed jirgas, the Minister responded that the leaders there were "certainly very influential". The tribes maintained a traditional lifestyle and their leaders were well respected. He explained that, if the tribal leaders agreed to accept the NW agreement, problems could get solved.

If they opposed it, problems would continue. If tribal members don't follow the orders of their leaders, they know it will be difficult for them to seek assistance in the future. Moreover, tribal leaders had the power to evict foreigners from their regions and thus play a key role,

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particularly because they all know each other. The Minister continued that the tribes at the border had good inter-tribal relations because they were essentially one tribe.

15. (C) A/DCM asked if the Minister had seen any concrete results from the NW Agreement. Brahowie responded that he had seen no improvement and that the pressure and insecurity were still there. POLCOUNS asked if the shuras could influence those responsible for the insurgency. The Minister highlighted this as an important issue. He said it would depend on how seriously and honestly we carried out the jirgas and how much importance we placed on the elders. He stressed that it was important for them to "feel the government's respect and reliance on them" for the jirgas to work. He explained that when tribal leaders say they will do something, they will. Tribal leaders have told the Minister that if the government used them to control the borders, they would be helpful. If the government didn't trust or rely on the tribes, then they would feel no responsibility to be cooperative. The tribes would even bear arms if they had the support and respect of the government.

Cross-Border Jirgas

16. (C) Regarding the proposed cross-border jirgas between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Minister stressed that if the two countries proceeded down that path, there would be a positive outcome. He argued that tribes could set the course for both Presidents to talk and stop the violence. Whether it happens and how is the big question, he concluded.

17. (C) Brahowie explained that his Ministry was ready to convene the cross-border jirga between the two Presidents whenever he got the order from President Karzai. He said it could be arranged within a week. He was just waiting for instructions.

Comment

18. (C) Minister Brahowie was, not surprisingly, more upbeat

than others, including FM Spanta (reftel) about the role of tribal leaders, shuras, and jirgas in resolving the border security problem with Pakistan. The timing of the cross-border jirgas remains to be decided, although Afghan officials talk about convening the first one soon. Equally important is ensuring that the jirgas can contribute something tangible to relieve tensions, given that the tribal and ethnic leadership has been weakened during the past 25 years and that the Taliban have not hesitated to kill tribal leaders in Waziristan. We will work with the GOA to develop concrete ideas. When the cross-border jirgas are organized, the Tribal Affairs Ministry may play a significant support role, but the jirga initiative will (and must) clearly be organized and controlled out of the presidential Palace.

NORLAND